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# House Backs Covert Aid to Rebels in Angola

By **STEPHEN ENGELBERG**

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 17 — The House of Representatives today refused to cut off covert aid to rebels fighting the Soviet-backed Angolan Government. The vote was 229 to 186.

A coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats rejected a proposal by the Intelligence Committee that barred aid to the rebels unless it was openly approved by the Congress.

Representative Lee H. Hamilton, the Indiana Democrat who is chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, argued that major foreign policy decisions such as those involving aid to

combatants in a war, ought to be made only after full public debate. He also said the rebels' ties to South Africa would harm this country's reputation in the region.

But a majority of members voting supported the view that the covert aid to the Angolan rebels was a cornerstone of the Reagan Administration's policy of aiding anti-Soviet insurgencies. They also expressed support for the rebel leader, Jonas Savimbi.

Representative Henry J. Hyde, Republican of Illinois, argued that the President must have a right to take some actions without public debate. "It's a tough world," he said. "Some

things must done in secret to be successful." Other backers of aid said that secrecy was needed to protect nations that assist American covert programs.

According to Congressional sources, President Reagan late last year initiated a covert program to deliver approximately \$15 million in weapons and supplies to the Angolan rebels. The program's existence was disclosed in comments by President Reagan and other officials.

After blocking the ban on aid to the Angolan rebels, the House then approved the intelligence bill on a voice vote. The amount of money authorized for the agencies was not disclosed, but a committee report said that a "significant reduction" had been made in the Administration's proposal for "real growth" in the intelligence budget.

The vote on Angola was a clear victory for the Administration's policy of aiding anti-Communist insurgencies around the world. Aid to the Nicaraguan and Cambodian rebels has been approved in open Congressional votes. Other programs, including aid to rebels in Angola, Afghanistan and Ethiopia, have been handled as covert actions.

Such activities do not require Congressional approval although the House and Senate committees on intelligence are notified in advance. Congress can block a covert operation only by adding legislation to the annual authorization bill.

Representative Dick Cheney, Republican of Wyoming, was one of several

opponents of the ban on aid who reminded the House of a similar restriction relating to Angola that Congress adopted in 1975 and repealed last year.

"The House should not legislate another victory for Communism in Angola," Mr. Cheney said.

Proponents of the ban on aid argued that support of the rebels would be viewed in Africa and elsewhere as tantamount to a military alliance with South Africa. Much of the support for the rebels comes from Pretoria. The Angolan Government is backed by 35,000 Cuban troops and gets Soviet aid.

Supporters of Mr. Savimbi in the House defended his ties with South Africa, saying he was simply accepting aid wherever he could find it.

In another action, the House voted to approve an amendment that would ban American intelligence from sharing any information on South African opposition groups with Pretoria.